

**We claim:**

1. A dirt receptacle for a vacuum cleaner, the receptacle comprising:  
a rigid container having an outlet for the emptying of  
5 collected dirt,  
a closure for closing the outlet, and  
actuator means for moving the closure between a closed  
position and an open position, said actuator means being  
operable to control the position of the closure between said  
10 open and closed positions.
2. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 1, in which the  
outlet is provided at a position on the container which is  
located at the bottom thereof when the container is in use.
3. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 1, in which means  
15 are provided for retaining the closure in said open and/or  
closed positions.
4. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 1, in which the  
closure is biased into said open and/or closed positions.
5. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 1, in which the  
20 container comprises an open bottom forming the outlet.
6. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 1, in which the  
closure comprises a flap pivoted to the container.
7. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 6, in which the  
actuator comprises a handle mounted directly to said flap.

8. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 7, in which the actuator comprises a handle mounted directly to said flap adjacent the point where the flap is pivoted to the container.
9. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 6, in which the  
5 flap is also mounted to the container for translatory movement towards and away from said outlet thereof.
10. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 9, in which means are provided to guide the translatory movement of said flap towards and away from said outlet.
- 10 11. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 10, in which said guide means is arranged to only permit pivotal movement of the flap, when the latter is in a partially opened position between said open and closed positions.
12. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 11, in which the  
15 guide means is further arranged to retain said flap in a fully opened position.
13. A dirt receptacle as claimed in claim 1, in which the closure is arranged to locate at a partially opened position.
14. A vacuum cleaner comprising a dirt receptacle, the dirt  
20 receptacle comprising:  
a rigid container having an outlet for the emptying of collected dirt,  
a closure for closing the outlet, and  
actuator means for moving the closure between a closed  
25 position and an open position, said actuator means being operable to control the position of the closure between said open and closed positions.

15. A vacuum cleaner as claimed in claim 14, in which the vacuum cleaner comprises a cyclonic separator having a cylindrical-walled separation chamber.

16. A method of emptying a dirt receptacle of a vacuum  
5 cleaner, the receptacle comprising a rigid container having an outlet for the emptying of collected dirt, a closure for closing the outlet, the closure being moveable between a normally closed position and an open position, the method comprising removing the dirt receptacle from the vacuum  
10 cleaner, partially opening the closure and emptying fine dirt from the receptacle through the restricted outlet prior to fully opening the closure and emptying the remaining dirt from the receptacle.